

## Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-31

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TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02

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P R 261030Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9917

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MBABANE 1247

NAIROBI FOR REDSO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, EFIN, EC, US

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO PAVE THE BOTSWANA-ZAMBIAN ROAD

REF: (A) GABORONE 1302, (B) STATE 175668, (C) STATE 180875

1. WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE WASHINGTON'S SPEEDY RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT KHAMA'S REQUEST REF A FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE TO PAVE THE NATA-KAZUNGULA LINK OF THE BOTSWANA-ZAMBIAN ROAD. GOB IS MOST GRATEFUL FOR THIS FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE AND SEES IT AS A CONCRETE DEMONSTRATION OF U.S. DESIRE TO WORK WITH BOTSWANA AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION TO HEL  
P  
ACHIEVE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RACIAL JUSTICE  
E  
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

2. THE GOB WELCOMES VISIT OF TAM'S TEAM IN AUGUST AND APPRECIATES THE SCOPE OF WORK REF C.

3. AID/W SCOPE OF WORK CONTAINS SEVERAL WELCOME REFERENCES TO THE CHANGING-  
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ED POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT UNDERSTAND THAT STUDY IS TAKING PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF AN UNCERTAIN POLITICAL/SECURITY SITUATION AND NEW U.S. POLICY THRUSTS LOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA. TOWARD THIS END OFFER THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. I CONSIDER GOB REQUEST FOR CONTINUED U.S. ASSISTANCE IN UPGRADING BOTSWANA-BAMBIAN ROAD TO BE SOUND, TIMELY AND DESERVING OF HIGH PRIORITY SUPPORT. U.S. ASSISTANCE IN UPGRADING THE ROAD WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL IMPACT IN THE REGION AND STAND AS A CENTER-PIECE OF THE SECRETARY'S LUSAKA COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA AND ASSIST WITH REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT. PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF ASSURED INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT LINKAGES TO BOTSWANA AND NEIGHBORING BLACK AFRICAN STATES IN A PERIOD OF GROWING REGIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR UPGRADING THE BOT-ZAM ROAD WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO OUR BASIC OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING BOTSWANA AS A STABLE, DEMOCRATIC, MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY SO THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION THAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN UPGRADING THE BOTSWANA-ZAMBIAN ROAD WOULD SERVE U.S. POLITICAL, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS A WHOLE. IT IS OF OVERRIDING POLITICAL IMPORTANCE.

B. POLITICAL, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTIES WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS TO QUANTIFY FUTURE TRAFFIC FLOWS IN A SPECIFIED TIME FRAME WITH ANY DEGREE OF PRECISION. IN RHODESIA THE POLITICAL/SECURITY SITUATION IS CURRENTLY DETERIORATING WITH PROSPECTS FOR MASSIVE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN COMING MONTHS. SOME LIBERATION LEADERS ARE EVEN ADVOCATING ARMED CONFLICT RUNNING OVER 10 YEARS IN ORDER TO EFFECT A FUNDAMENTAL REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THE RHODESIA SOCIETY. EVEN IF SMITH COULD BE DELIVERED TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, THE TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE 18-24 MONTHS. LACK OF ANC LEADERSHIP, DISUNITY AND FACTIONALISM BETWEEN THE NATA-KAZUNGULA TRIBES MAY

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WELL LEAD TO CIVIL STRIFE DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD OR IN POST-INDEPENDENCE RHODESIA. ALL OF THIS POINTS TO POSSIBLE ECONOMIC DISLOCATION IN RHODESIA WITH MAJOR DISRUPTIONS OF EXISTING RAIL AND ROAD TRANSPORT ROUTES; THIS MEANS A SUBSTANTIAL DIVERSION OF ZAMBIAN AND ZAIRE TRAFFIC THROUGH BOTSWANA. GOB ANXIETY ABOUT PROBLEMS OF MAINTAINING THE AID FINANCED GRAVEL ROAD UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS IS FULLY WARRANTED. DIVERSION OF RAIL AND ROAD TRAFFIC WHICH PRESENTLY FLOWS NORTH TO ZAMBIA AND ZAIRE THROUGH RHODESIA WOULD PLACE EXTRA-

ORDINARY BURDENS ON THE NATA-KAZUNGULA LINK OF THE BOTSWANA-ZAMBIAN ROAD. ALSO BOTSWANA CANNOT BE CERTAIN ABOUT THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT THAT WILL EMERGE IN RHODESIA. IF MARXIST-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP COMES TO POWER, AS IN MOZAMBIQUE, WE WOULD NOT BE SANGUINE ABOUT SECURITY OF TRANSPORT ROUTES THROUGH RHODESIA. IN ANY CASE BOTSWANA SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN A POSITION OF BEING FORCED TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH SUCH A GOVERNMENT. IT NEEDS ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

C. MOREOVER, RECENT URBAN STRIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE PROSPECT OF MOUNTING INDUSTRIAL TURMOIL WITH VIOLENCE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN CONTINUED ACCESS FOR BOTSWANA TO SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS AND MARKETS OVER LONGER TERM. SHOULD THIS ACCESS BE LOST OR RESTRICTED (WITH OR WITHOUT CLOSURE OF THE RHODESIAN RAILWAY), BOTSWANA WOULD BECOME DEPENDENT UPON THE BOT-ZAM ROUTE TO A MUCH GREATER EXTENT THAN PREVIOUSLY CONTEMPLATED.

D. IN LIGHT THESE CONSIDERATIONS, RENEWED GOB DETERMINATION TO ENSURE ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS IN FUTURE IS ENTIRELY JUSTIFIED. GOB DECISION TO INVEST SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN THIS ENDEAVOR IS FOUNDED IN FIRST INSTANCE ON PERCEIVED POLITICAL AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN PRESERVING ECONOMIC LIFELINES, AND SECONDARILY IN THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE ESSENTIAL TO ATTRACT ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL. PURSUANT TO JUNE WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS, I STRONGLY WELCOME POSITIVE RESPONSE ALREADY UNDERWAY, INCLUDING IMMEDIATE STEPS BEING TAKEN TO INITIATE REQUIRED PROGRAMMING/FUNDING/TECHNICAL MEASURES.

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